

MELKSHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



THE
ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

and the

Public Health Inspector

for the Year 1971

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To the Chairman and Members of

MELKSHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report on the health of the town for 1971.

I am sure on reading this report the facts and figures given indicate a satisfactory state of health affairs in the town.

Much of routine environmental health work depends on routine inspection and observation. However complaints concerning food, noise nuisances, smoke nuisance etc. are also a useful source of information for which we must thank the general public. Most complaints are settled satisfactorily and especially when done informally, with an improvement of good will and a lesson learned by the "offender". This is especially so in food hygiene cases when a definite hygiene defect can be discussed with more concern than the exhortations in general terms given on a routine visit. The maintenance and improvement of food hygiene standards needs not only knowledge and good habits but a definite wish to improve them on the part of those concerned. The increasing interest of customers in food hygiene, as I have seen in several lectures on the subject given locally, is a very useful stimulus.

In conclusion I must thank Mr. Acres and Mrs. Wells, our secretary for their ready help and support during the year.

G. WOLFENDEN,

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

G. Wolfenden, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.

Who is also Medical Officer of Health
to Bradford and Melksham Rural District
Council and Assistant County Medical Officer.

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

W. F. Acres, M.A.P.H.I., A.R.S.H.

Who is also Housing Maintenance Officer and
Petroleum Officer for Melksham Urban District Council.

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VITAL STATISTICS

These are mainly compiled from figures kindly supplied by the Registrar General.

(a) GENERAL

Area of the District 1,042 acres

Estimated mid-year population 1970 9,580

Estimated mid-year population 1971 9850

(b) BIRTHS

Live Births

Births	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	88	80	168
Illegitimate	5	4	9
Total	93	84	177

The Birth Rate was 18.0 per 1,000 population. When corrected for comparability this rate becomes 17.5 per 1,000. This can then be compared with the national rate for 1971 of 16.0 per 1,000 and our 1970 figure of 18.0.

The actual numbers of births decreased by 1, male births increasing by 9 and female decreasing by 8.

5% of births were illegitimate, a decrease of 1% from 1970.

Still Births

There were rather more still births this year than usual - there being 6 male and 1 female, giving a still birth rate of 3.8 per 1,000 total births.

(c) DEATHS

61 males and 46 females died in 1971 giving a total of 107 deaths. This was a decrease of 17 on 1970 - all the decrease being in male deaths. The Death Rate was 10.9. Adjusted for comparability our rate becomes 13.4 per 1,000 and can be compared with the national rate of 11.6. 67% of our deaths were over 65 years of age and 42% were 75 or over.

(d) INFANT MORTALITY

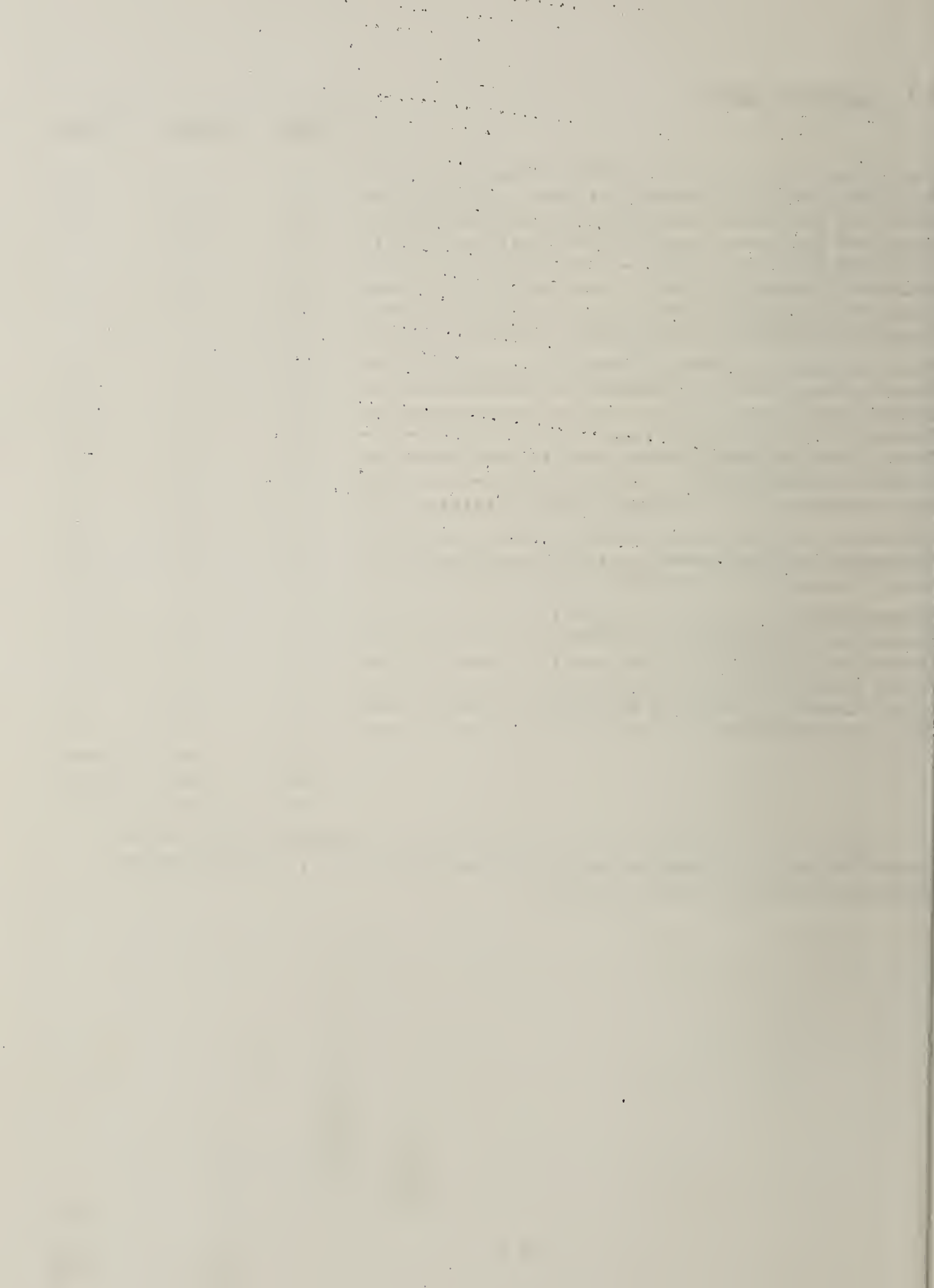
There were six infant deaths under the age of 1 year, three being under the age of 1 week, giving the following rates:-

Infant mortality rate 34 per 1,000	(England and Wales 18)
Neonatal mortality rate 28 per 1,000	(England and Wales 12)
Perinatal mortality rate 54 per 1,000	(England and Wales 22)

(e) CAUSES OF DEATH

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Enteritis & other Diarrhoeal Disease	1		1
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	1	1	2
Malignant Neoplasm, Intestine	1	3	4
Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	6	3	9
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	-	1	1
Malignant Neoplasm, Prostate	1	-	1
Other Malignant Neoplasms	2	5	7
Benign and Unspecified Neoplasms	-	1	1
Other Diseases of Nervous System	2	-	2
Chronic Rheumatic Heart Disease	1	1	2
Hypertensive Disease	1	1	2
Ischaemic Heart Disease	17	11	28
Other forms of Heart Disease	4	2	6
Cerebrovascular Disease	9	9	18
Other Diseases of circulatory system	1	2	3
Pneumonia	3	2	5
Bronchitis and Emphysema	3	1	4
Other Diseases of respiratory system	4	-	4
Appendicitis	-	1	1
Intestinal obstruction and hernia	1	-	1
Congenital Anomalies	1	-	1
Birth Injury, Difficult Labour etc.	1	-	1
Other Causes of Perinatal Mortality	1	-	1
All other Accidents	-	2	-
	<u>61</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>107</u>

Deaths due to Cancer increased during 1971, noticeably those due to Cancer of Lung and Bronchus which increased from 3 to 9. Deaths due to Coronary Thrombosis also increased.



INFECTIOUS DISEASES

We had a moderate epidemic of measles this year, mainly occurring in the last quarter of the year. As usual this mainly attacked the under 7 age groups.

There was an unusual incidence of tuberculosis this year, 5 new cases being notified. There was no apparent connection between these cases.

There were three cases of Salmonella infections in adults. Two of the cases were in the same household and no cause was traced. The other case appeared to be an infection contracted on holiday abroad.

Analysis of Infectious Disease by Age and Sex

Age	Measles		Hepatitis		Whooping Cough		Scarlet Fever	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Under 1 year	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 4 years	20	21	-	-	-	1	-	-
5 - 9 years	14	26	-	-	4	-	-	1
10 - 14 years	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
15 and over	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	37	51	1	-	4	2	-	1

Comparison with Previous Years

Disease	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
Whooping Cough	20	2	8	-	5	6
Measles	53	183	8	53	49	88
Dysentery	-	-	4	1	-	-
Infectious Jaundice	Not notifiable		9	3	8	1
Tuberculosis	-	2	2	-	1	5
Scarlet Fever	-	-	-	8	1	1

IMMUNISATION

The tables which follow were kindly supplied by the County Medical Officer of Health.

Virtually all babies born in Melksham in 1970 were given primary immunisation by the end of 1971 and quite a number of babies born in that year who moved into Melksham were also immunised - giving us an immunisation level of 119.7% on 1970 births. This can be compared with the average for the County of 82.1%.

Measles immunisation, offered in the second year of life has shown a satisfactory increase and one could now anticipate a steady decrease in measles notifications among the younger age groups. About 70% of the 1970 births have been immunised.

The risks of dying from smallpox in recent years have been less than the risks from vaccination and so from September 1971 smallpox vaccination as a routine is no longer encouraged, except when required for overseas travel.

IMMUNISATION & SMALLPOX VACCINATION STATISTICS 1971

Year of Birth		1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1962-66	1956-61	Others Under 16
Primary Imms. completed during 1971	Diph.	89	127	12	1	2	4	1	-
	Wh.C.	82	123	11	-	-	-	-	-
	Tetanus	89	127	12	2	2	4	6	-
	Measles	-	129	33	10	10	3	-	-
	Polio	88	127	12	1	2	6	1	-
Reinforcing Imms. given In 1971	Diph.	5	47	77	12	47	62	4	-
	Wh.C.	-	7	16	1	3	5	-	-
	Tetanus	5	47	77	12	45	63	8	-
	Polio	1	43	72	10	44	60	4	-

SMALLPOX

	Months				Years		
Age Group	0 - 3	3 - 6	6 - 9	9 - 12	1	2 - 4	5 - 15
Vaccinations	-	-	-	-	27	58	7
Re-vaccinations	-	-	-	-	-	1	28

COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH SERVICES

The County Council is responsible for the personal health services, under the direction of Dr. C. D. L. Lycett, County Medical Officer of Health.

Four Health Visitors and two District Nurse/Midwives are centred in the town. With the decrease of domiciliary midwifery, the District Nurses are mainly concerned with home nursing. The Health Visitors, each of whom is attached to two of the towns general practitioners, are mainly concerned with the young and old of our population. They give useful advice in the case of children and are particularly helpful to young and inexperienced mothers. The elderly benefit from their care not only by health advice but by the arrangement when necessary of home helps and also by information on other forms of help available from Voluntary, County Council and Central Government sources.

Much of the County Health service centres in the Health Clinic at Lowbourne. Here, every Thursday from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. child welfare clinics are held, also Cytology Clinics (1st and 3rd Wednesdays by appointment 2 - 3 p.m.) and Relaxation (ante natal exercises) are held on Wednesday at 2 p.m. The Clinic also has a Dental Clinic for children (by appointment only).

Other clinics, all by appointment, which are held are Immunisation, Speech Therapy, Remedial Exercises, Orthopaedic and Enuresis. A Chiropody session for the elderly is also available by appointment.

The Bradford-on-Avon Maternity Hospital hold ante-natal clinics there on Monday and Friday afternoons. A Marriage Guidance session is also held from time to time by the Marriage Guidance Council.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Apart from its own Melksham Hospital the Bath Hospitals are used and they also provide the visiting Consultants. Maternity cases are mainly dealt with at Bradford-on-Avon Maternity Hospital and occasionally Trowbridge and Bath.

LABORATORY SERVICES

All our public health specimens are dealt with by the Public Health Laboratory at Manor Hospital, Bath. Dr. Mann and his staff continue to give us excellent service, especially in the advice they give.

Report of the
PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the fifteenth time I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report for the Urban District. Last year I referred in apprehensive terms to the role of the local Public Health Inspectors after the proposed re-organisation of Local Government in 1974. To the extent that these officers will now definitely operate in the second-tier authorities, such fears have been allayed. In 1974 the trickle of documents, meetings and discussions on the major topic of the coming amalgamations developed into a sizeable stream of ever increasing proportions. From many aspects of public health, one would still reserve judgment, but, the general prospect is better than at one time seemed possible, and the essential local contact may well be maintained.

Obviously all this has been time-consuming, but I venture that the attached details present a reasonable advance over some previous years, and I once again express my thanks to the Public Health Committee for their understanding of all the difficulties. Also to Dr. Wolfenden, to Mrs. Wells, and to all colleagues for their ready help and co-operation.

W. F. ACRES,

Public Health Inspector

HOUSING ACTS 1957 - 64

(i) Action during the year:-

Number of inspections and re-inspections	42
Number of Time & Place Notices, Section 16/57	-
Number of Closing Orders, whole house, Section 17/57	1
Number of Closing Orders, part house, Section 18/57	1
Number of Closing Orders determined, Section 27/57	1
Number of Demolition Orders, Section 17/57	-
Number of Houses demolished	3
Number of Repair Notices, Section 9/57	-

(ii) By and large, action has been completed on Clearance Area Work, and the sub-standard houses still existing are mainly to be treated as Individual Unfit Houses. During 1971 some of the houses so scheduled were demolished as part of the preliminary work on the new Melksham Relief Road, other houses were sold and put into good order by the new owner/occupiers. It can be safely said that there is no major problem to be dealt with under these Acts, only isolated cases.

(iii) Co-operation between the Public Health Committee and the Housing Committee is excellent. In cases where formal action has been taken, re-housing has been dealt with urgently; and where the Health Committee has made formal representations for other housing aspects, considerable attention has been paid to the recommendations.

(iv) Common Lodging Houses - there are no such houses in the area.

(v) Improvements to Older Houses

A further 33 pre-war Council houses were modernised on discretionary grant basis under my control as Housing Maintenance Officer by the Council's own direct labour force at a cost of £16,360. The advantages to the Council, and to the tenants concerned, are well appreciated. Tenants are invited to volunteer to have their houses so treated rather than by a rigid house-to-house and street-by-street basis. In this way, everything has gone extremely smoothly and despite the scope of work in some types of houses, no tenant is out of his house for more than 3 weeks.

Whilst the Health Department is not involved in improvements to older private houses, it is pleasing to note a slight increase in the number of grants made by the Council to 23 in 1971.

An interesting project was carried out in the early part of the year when the Council purchased a modern block of 12 flats which were becoming decrepit and unsatisfactory for various reasons, and furthermore, a constant source of applicants and accordingly an embarrassment to the Housing Committee. The cost of improvements to weatherproofing, heating, decorating and maintaining the property were approved for loan purposes by the Government, and the work was done by the Housing Maintenance Department. In the event, this proved to be a most successful and rewarding exercise; it also relieved the Council of previously frustrating action under the Public Health Acts.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS 1936 and 1961

(i)	Number of Inspections	52
	Number of Informal Notices served	11
	Number of Statutory Notices served	1
	Number of Statutory Notices complied	1
	Notices complied with (informal)	10

Relatively few complaints were received and no difficulties arose in having various defects repaired.

(ii) Verminous Premises and Other Infestations

No verminous premises were reported or discovered. Identification and advice on treatment was given in other instances of insect problems. This is done in co-operation with a specialist firm who not only identify but give full advice.

(iii) Drainage and Sewerage

Very few houses indeed are not connected to the public sewers in the Urban area, probably less than ten in all. The arrangements for sewerage and the disposal works are reasonably adequate.

The sludge disposal problem reported on in previous years did not give rise to special anxieties in 1971. The collection of same by an outside contractor proved to be regular and reasonably satisfactory.

One problem arose when a main sewer became blocked due to the specific effluent from a factory, and this was cleared with some difficulty.

Towards the end of the year, the River Authority indicated that the effluent from the Town's disposal works had reached the "consent" limit, and doubtless more will be heard of this in the future and its repercussions on development in the Urban and surrounding area.

(iv) Water Supplies

The town receives its supplies from the West Wilts Water Board, but part of the Northern area is linked to the North Wilts Board. Quality is excellent and pressures adequate throughout the town.

The waters are not plumbo-solvent, but are extremely hard. Copies of frequent sampling checks are received from the two Boards, and the occasional check sample is taken by the Department. All were satisfactory.

At the factory having its own well supply for domestic use, all samples taken proved satisfactory bacteriologically.

CLEAN AIR ACT 1956/8

No formal action was taken in respect of the infrequent complaint of smoke nuisance from factory chimneys, and informal action gave satisfactory results.

One formal application for a new factory furnace was approved under Section 3.

Proposals from a local factory for two large incinerators, one for trade waste, and one for burning rubber came before the Council. These were for disposal of 70 and 57 tons per week respectively and were obviously applications of some significance. It was, therefore, decided to engage consultants (N.I.F.E.S.) to examine the proposals. After the most careful consideration of the Consultants' very full reports, approvals were given under the Acts.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT 1949

The part-time operator (shared with by the Rural District Council) continues to give excellent service with rodent control work.

During the year 1941 properties were treated for rats or mice as compared with 193 the previous year. Of these 81 were domestic premises.

The work is free for domestic premises, but a small charge is made to cover costs in other instances. The operator also deals with other types of infestations such as wasps nests, cluster flies etc. Some 50/60 wasps nests were dealt with in the late summer to autumn.

CARAVAN SITES AND CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT ACT 1960

The one residential site of 56 caravans is extremely well appointed and all conditions of site licence are fully maintained.

PETROLEUM (CONSOLIDATION) ACT 1928

Seventeen licences were issued involving 68,550 gallons of petroleum during the year; two licences totalling 3,000 gallons were discontinued.

It is true to say that the standards at all installations are now extremely good, and only minor defects occasionally have to be dealt with at the annual inspections.

One new licence issued was for an unattended self service pump. This was the first such installation licensed in the area, and the stringent conditions recommended by the Fire Brigade were fully complied with.

One is again very grateful to the Wiltshire County Fire Brigade (Fire Prevention Department) for their excellent and enthusiastic work as the Council's Inspecting Officers.

RENT ACT 1957

No certificates of Disrepair were applied for, and again no enquiries of any sort.

MILK AND DAIRIES

Regular routine sampling of all milks sold or produced and sold in the Urban area continued under delegated powers from the County Council. No 'Untreated' milk is sold and all figures, therefore, relate to pasteurised milks:-

Samples taken	30
Satisfactory	30
Unsatisfactory	-

There are two producer/retailer licences issued by the County Council, and licences issued by this Council are as follows:-

Dealer's (Untreated) Licences	1
Dealer's (Pre-Packed) Untreated	-
Dealer's (Pre-Packed) Pasteurised Licences	18
Dealer's (Pre-Packed) U.H.T. Licences	11
Dealer's (Pre-Packed) Sterilised Licences	1

It is interesting to note the advent of U.H.T. milk into the area. Such 'long-life' milk is mainly used as a standby at the moment, but may well become the standard article in the future with deliveries over a week, or even monthly. I would hope that soon date stamping of the carton will be obligatory and clear to the consumer. Code numbers are not really satisfactory for this type of article of food.

NOISE ABATEMENT ACT 1960

The problem of unmuffled road breakers caused a certain amount of difficulty on one or two occasions. Despite every co-operation from the public utilities, there seems to be a disinclination on the part of the operatives to use mufflers. However, a personal approach at the time does good.

There were also two occasions when it was necessary to check operators of mobile ice-cream vehicles sounding chimes outside the permitted hours of 12 noon to 7 p.m.

It was necessary through non-compliance of an informal notice to obtain authority and serve formal notice under Section 93 of the Public Health Act 1936 on the owner of premises causing a statutory nuisance due to excessive noise from laundry machinery. This notice was complied with but not within the period stated. Summonses had been drawn up, but the nuisance was abated before service of same.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT 1955

(i) There are no egg pasteurisation plants in the district.

(ii) No systematic routine inspections under the Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1960 were possible with the staff available, but I was able to link in many inspections with other work. In general, the standard is good and the new shops opened all tended to raise the overall standard.

Numbers of food premises as required by Circular 1/72 grouped in trades:-

Restaurants, Snack Bars etc.	9
Public Houses and Clubs	13
Confectioners	5
Butchers	6
Groceries and General	20
Fruit and Vegetables	3
Dairy	1
Bakers	4
Off Licences	3
Fishmongers	3

(iii) Details of complaints received and dealt with as follows:-

- (a) Foreign body (feather) in a loaf. Stringent investigation and considerable improvements in plant and methods resulted at the bakery concerned.
- (b) Chicken curry alleged to taste 'odd'. Premises and methods carefully checked.
- (c) Unsound biscuits - investigations inconclusive.
- (d) Mouldy loaves (internal). Informal action only, but possibly due to inadequate stock rotation. Warning given.
- (e) Mouldy loaf (external). Inconclusive.
- (f) Cooked meats stale - unsatisfactory storage conditions at the Supermarket concerned. Advice given.
- (g) Tin of raspberries found to be maggoty. Isolated case and no further action taken.
- (h) Foreign body (metal nut) in a pie. Exhaustive enquiries at factory inconclusive. The Committee agreed no formal action on hearing all the reports and evidence.
- (i) Bread pudding mouldy - unsatisfactory storage at cafe. Warnings and advice given.
- (j) Foreign body in a cake (cigarette butt) - manufacturer carefully checked, and explanation accepted.

In no case was it necessary to proceed to formal action.

(iv) Poultry Inspections

There is one poultry processing plant in the district, and occasional visits are made. About 50,000 birds are processed yearly, mostly hens and some turkeys.

Inspections, ante-mortem and post-mortem are carried out by the proprietor, and no precise percentage of rejections is available.

(v) Ice Cream Premises

Two new registrations for the storage and sale of Ice Cream were issued during the year. There are no premises manufacturing ice-cream in the town. All registered premises complied with the appropriate regulations. One was in respect of 'soft' ice-cream and here keen attention was paid to manufacturer's recommendations.

SWIMMING POOLS

(i) Blue Pool

This public pool was conducted in a satisfactory manner. Daily local checks of free chlorine are taken, and I inspect these records from time to time, and also take the occasional sample for bacteriological examination. These were all satisfactory.

Source of water is from the mains and constant re-circulation on a 6/8 hour basis is maintained. Treatment consists of filtration by twin Diafilters, followed by chlorination and then aeration over a cascade.

(ii) Paddling Pool, King George's Field

Hand chlorination of this shallow pool is used and is, in the main satisfactory.

(iii) Shurnhold School

Chlorination and filtration plant proved adequate and samples taken were satisfactory.

(iv) Lowbourne School

Again a small training pool with adequate plant, and samples taken were satisfactory.

OFFICES, SHOPS AND RAILWAY PREMISES ACT 1963

(i) Most of the initial inspections had been carried out in previous years and up-to-date details are as follows:

	Number of Premises Registered During the Year	Total Number of Registered Premises at End of Year	Number of Persons Employed	No. of Registered Premises receiving a General Inspection During the Year
Offices	-	26	267	3
Shops	3	100	410	29
Wholesale Warehouses	-	1	23	-
Catering Est.	-	11	35	10
Fuel Storage Depot	-	-	-	-
Totals	3	138	735	42

Number of visits of all kinds to registered premises 63

Only a limited number of routine visits was made in this connection mainly on new registrations and some checking of earlier defects being rectified.

(ii) Accidents

One accident, non-fatal, was reported requiring no detailed investigation.

FACTORIES ACT 1961

Action taken is shown in the following table:-

FACTORIES

Number on Register 31.12.71	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
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Inspections

- (1) Factories in which Section 1,2,3,4 and 6 are enforced by Local Authority (non-power)
- (2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (power)
- (3) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)

Total

1	-	-	-
34	-	-	-

Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector	by H.M. Inspector	Number of Cases in which prosecutions were instituted
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- Defects
- Want of Cleanliness (S.1)
- Overcrowding (S.2)
- Unreasonable temperature (S.3)
- Inadequate Ventilation (S.4)
- Infective drainage of floors (S.6)
- Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)
- (a) Insufficient
- (b) Unsuitable or defective
- (c) Not separate for sexes
- Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)

Total

2	2	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
3	3	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
5	5	-	-	-

HOUSING MAINTENANCE

As this work takes up a great deal of the Department's time, some reference should be made here. As Housing Maintenance Officer to the Council, the repairs and improvements to the 1,432 Council dwellings is under my control. A direct labour organisation of 21 men, including a foreman, various tradesmen, labourers and apprentices, is operated.

On repairs and decorations alone, some £27,000 per annum is spent. The Department has excellent workshop and stores facilities in the main Bradford Road Depot and sufficient transport facilities.

In this way, nearly 45% of the town's inhabited properties are maintained to a high standard. The work of modernising pre-war Council houses is most rewarding and is greatly appreciated by the tenants concerned.

Most of the maintenance work of other Council properties, e.g. Town Hall, Conveniences etc. is also done by the Department.

